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SUBJECT: JANUARY 7 MFA PRESS BRIEFING:

11. Key points at the January 7 MFA press briefing were:

-- China opposes the use of sanctions against Iran and believes nuclear proliferation concerns should be resolved through diplomatic channels.

-- Japan's territorial claim to the "reef" in the East China Sea goes against the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the common interests of the international community.

-- China firmly opposes U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, which it believes are inconsistent with the three Joint Communiques, especially the August 17 Communique.

-- MFA Spokeswoman Jiang Yu was not aware that Tibetan film maker Dhondup Wangchen had been sentenced to prison but claimed that "only those who break the law are punished."

-- China and Taiwan will begin negotiating ECFA on January 20.

-- Information about Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei's transfer and end of term will be available "in due course."

Iran Sanctions

12. At the January 7 regularly scheduled Foreign Ministry press briefing, Spokesperson Jiang Yu said that, as Chinese Ambassador to the UN Zhang Yesui had already stated, China opposes the use of sanctions against Iran. China believed resolution of the Iran nuclear issue should be pursued through diplomatic channels and hoped that the nations concerned do not abandon diplomatic efforts. Jiang urged "flexibility" in reaching a resolution.

Japanese Territorial Claims

13. Japan's claims to the "reef" in the East China Sea (although Jiang did not identify them by name she may have been referring to the Diaoyutai/Senkaku Islands) violate both the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the "common interests" of the international community. Building structures on the disputed "reef" will not change its legal status, Jiang said.

Arms Sales to Taiwan

14. China firmly opposed U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, Jiang said. Arms sales run contrary to the three Joint Communiques, especially the August 17 Communique, asserted Jiang. The United States should stop selling arms to Taiwan since arms sales undermine "overall cooperation" between the United States and China.

Dhondup Wangchen Sentence

¶5. Asked about the December 28 sentencing of filmmaker Dhondup Wangchen, Jiang said she was not aware of any prison sentence being handed down in the case. However, she asserted that Chinese citizens enjoy freedom of speech and equal treatment before the law. "Only those who break the law are punished," Jiang said.

Cross-Strait Economic Talks

¶6. Jiang announced that China and Taiwan would begin negotiations on the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) on January 20.

Software Piracy

¶7. In response to an inquiry about the reports that Green Dam software had been pirated from a U.S. firm, Jiang stated that China "highly values and fully respects" intellectual property rights and opposes computer software piracy.

He Yafei

¶8. When asked if Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei, whose end of term had been announced by the State Council on January 4, had been removed from his post for poor performance, Jiang replied that information will become available "in due course."

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Inauguration of Mozambique President

¶9. China's Minister of Commerce Chen Deming would travel to Mozambique January 13-14 in the capacity of special envoy to attend the inauguration of President Armando Guebuza, Jiang announced.

HUNTSMAN